

## Dalai Lama suggests EU model for Tibet, China

Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama Thursday said the European Union offered a possible political model for China and Tibet to co-exist in 'meaningful autonomy'.

Dismissing calls for Tibetan independence, the Dalai Lama said he was 'fully committed' to an idea of autonomy where Beijing would be responsible for defence and foreign policy, leaving business, education, environment and other matters to be 'handled by Tibetans themselves'.

'That's meaningful autonomy,' the Dalai Lama said in an interview with BBC radio broadcast Thursday.

'The world is changing. Look at the European Union. They are looking at common interests and common economic goals. That's one example.

'The individual state, in the modern sense, is not much relevant - this is my view,' he added.

The Dalai Lama said such autonomy was in China's interest too, as 'Tibetan Buddhist culture can make a great contribution to the cultural heritage of China'.

But he warned that calls for independence would spread if there is 'no improvement inside Tibet and ruthless suppression continues'.

The Dalai Lama also gave his backing to those Western leaders who were considering staying away from the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics in August in a symbolic protest.

'Right from the beginning I have fully supported the Olympic games. In the meantime, I also made clear the world [should] take this opportunity to remind the Chinese government of [its] poor record on human rights, religious freedoms and the environment.

'[If] individuals feel that the best way to remind them is to not to attend, then do it. If they feel to talk and meet with Chinese leaders is more effective then go there,' he said.

The Dalai Lama played down a political controversy over a decision by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown not to host the Tibetan leader at his offices at 10 Downing Street, and to meet him instead at a reception for religious leaders to be hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

'From my part, [there's] no difference, so long [as we are] meeting. Prime minister, I think, [is] becoming more spiritual-minded,' he joked.

*Dipankar De Sarkar (© IANS / India eNews)*